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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

22 July 1957

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Checklist of Possible Critical Developments in
Certain States of the Middle East*

I. Arab-Israeli Conflict

1. Arab-Israeli War deliberately initiated.

Unlikely.

2. Continuance of border raids across Syrian-Israeli border.

Likely, but these would probably not reach point of triggering major hostilities unless one of the parties desired this. We believe that neither government wants war, but hot heads in Syria, such as Serraj, aiming to further their take-over of the Syrian government, might risk large raids on Israel. This would provoke substantial Israeli retaliation.

3. Raids across Jordan-Israel border.

Unlikely.

* This memorandum covers Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the Sheikdoms of the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey, and Israel.

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4. Egyptian-Israeli war.

Unlikely.

5. Arab-Israeli conflict arising from Aqaba dispute.

Incidents likely, but not on a scale to result in war.



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6. Arab-Israeli conflict arising from disputed Israeli attempt to transit Suez Canal.

Incidents likely -- with seriousness depending upon form of Israeli action (i.e., attempt to transit flag vessel, chartered vessel, or merely goods) -- but not on scale to result in war.

7. Arab-Israel conflict spreading from action between Israel and one Arab State:

Likely but extent unpredictable -- depending upon circumstances.

II. Involvement of Turkey and France

1. Entrance of Turkey.

Likely in event breakdown Syrian government, but only to occupy northern areas.

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2. Entrance of France

Likely France would further assist Israel with arms but would not involve military personnel, except in training capacity.

III. Conflict in Arabian Peninsula

1. Continued sporadic Yemeni attacks leading to frontier skirmishes with UK forces in Aden.

Likely.

2. Action against the UK protected sheikhdom of Oman and Muscat.

In progress -- probably Saudi inspired, with some Egyptian encouragement.

3. Incidents in other Arabian Peninsula sheikhdoms.

Likely, under Saudi and possibly Egyptian stimulus.

IV. Soviet invasion or intervention with uniformed forces in Middle East area states.

Very slight chance.

V. Soviet intervention with "volunteers" in a widespread Arab-Israeli conflict.

About an even chance but on a discreet basis.

VI. Extension of Soviet influence and control

1. Soviet diplomatic, economic, propaganda, and cultural campaign to increase Soviet area prestige and damage West position.

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2. Continuation of Soviet moves to establish influence over Yemen on pattern established in Egypt and Syria.

Likely.

Over states in area (other than Egypt, Syria, Yemen)

Slight.

3. Establishment of overtly Moscow-dominated Communist regimes in states of the area.

Slight. (Though Syria, Egypt, Yemen may come under increasing Soviet influence)

4. Sale of Soviet arms on pattern established and continuing in Egypt, Syria, and Yemen to other area states.

Slight for the near future.

5. Establishment of Soviet military bases in Egypt, Syria or Yemen.

Very slight at the moment.

6. Establishment in the area of Soviet controlled arms stockpiles for their own use.

Slight.

- 4 -

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VII. Local Political Developments

1. Overthrow of conservative regime in Iraq by revolutionary anti-West regime.

Less than even chance.

2. Overthrow of King Saud by palace revolution (with or without Egyptian support)

Less than even chance.

3. Anti-monarchist army revolution in Saudi Arabia

Slight, but odds increasing.

4. Complete takeover of Syrian Government by Leftist forces

Likely.

5. Takeover of Syrian Government by Rightist forces.

Less than even chance.

6. Leftist-Nationalist movement in Kuwait or Bahrein crippling or overthrowing government.

Slight but odds increasing.

7. Decision of Iraqi Government to change orientation of foreign policy.

Unlikely in present circumstances.

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8. Return by King Saud to his former relationship with Egypt and Syria.

Less than even chance.

9. Return by King Hussein to close relationship with Egypt and Syria.

Unlikely.

10. Overthrow of King Hussein by Egyptian-oriented opposition.

Less than even chance in the near future -- apart from assassination danger.

11. Egyptian engineered coup in Saudi Arabia.

Unlikely in the near future.

VIII. Breakdown of order in area states.

1. Breakdown of internal order in Syria following attempted coup.

Even chance.

2. Breakdown of order in Jordan.

Less than even chance except in case of assassination.

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IX. Large-scale Anti-Western actions set off by political or military developments.

1. Sabotage of oil installations in producing states.

Unlikely except in event of breakdown of authority or hostilities pitting Arabs against West.

2. Large-scale attacks on pipelines and terminal installations.

Unlikely except in above-listed circumstances with Aramco installations there likely to be included.

3. Closure of Suez Canal.

Unlikely except under above-listed circumstances.

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